

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2002

HINCHEY JOINS IN LAWSUIT TO PREVENT WITHDRAWAL FROM ABM TREATY

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) and 30 of his House colleagues have filed a lawsuit in federal district court to block President Bush from withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The United States officially leaves the treaty on Thursday.

"The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty has served world security well for 30 years," said Hinchey. "The 'every-nation-for-itself' nuclear policy set to replace the ABM Treaty will have a destabilizing effect on world peace. Beyond the harm caused by this specific action, the president is setting a dangerous precedent by exercising powers not given to him by the Constitution."

President Bush announced his intention to leave the ABM Treaty six months ago. The treaty prohibited the United States and the Soviet Union from building major missile defenses. It has been an impediment to the Bush Administration's plans to move ahead with a missile defense system. With the treaty out of the way, the Pentagon plans a groundbreaking ceremony this Saturday at Fort Greely, Alaska to begin construction on the first portion of a new missile interceptor system. This system, which has been criticized extensively by the scientific community as unworkable, is expected to cost at least \$200 billion.

The lawsuit requests a decision on whether or not the Constitution permits the president to withdraw from the treaty without the consent of Congress. Hinchey and the other plaintiffs tried to get the House to vote on a resolution stating that the president must seek congressional consent, but House Republicans unanimously rejected a motion to bring the issue to a vote.